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ABSTRACT

This document launches a wide public consultation with all those involved in and with an interest in the European Union's (EU's) education, training, and youth programs called Socrates, Tempus, Leonardo da Vinci, and Youth for Europe. It is the first step toward preparing the new generation of programs to start in 2007 and will inform the Commission of European Communities's upcoming detailed proposals for such programs. Sections 2-4 set out the context for this consultation, reporting what has been achieved so far in EU programs; what have been the main developments at European level in education, training, and youth policy; and the scope of program action in these fields. Consultees are invited to respond to a series of 13 key questions that are set out in detail in Section 5. They are divided into these three sections: the type of action to be supported through European programs in the period after 2006; the geographical coverage of the programs (which countries should be involved in which actions); and the design and structure of the new generation of programs. Section 6 explains the different ways the consultees can send in their views. The appendix contains a list of 17 web addresses, offering more information about each action or policy mentioned in the document. (YLB)

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EUROPEAN COMMISSION
Directorate-General for Education and Culture

THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION EDUCATION, TRAINING AND YOUTH PROGRAMMES AFTER 2006

A PUBLIC CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

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European Commission
Directorate General for Education and Culture
Brussels, November 2002

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Foreword by Mrs Viviane Reding, Member of the European Commission

This is a vital time for the future of education, training and youth policies at European level. Their role in underpinning economic success, in equipping people with the skills to respond to the challenges of new technologies and globalisation, in combating social exclusion, and in promoting understanding between different cultural groups, has never been more important. The idea of lifelong learning is becoming firmly established as a core principle underlying education and training systems. The importance of continuing to update and improve these systems was explicitly recognised by European Heads of Government at their summit in Lisbon in 2000.

European countries are coming increasingly to appreciate how much we can gain from working together and how much we can learn from each other's education, training and youth systems. That is why the past few years have seen a whole host of new actions in the field, including the definition of common objectives for European education and training up to the year 2010.

The European Union's programmes Socrates, Tempus, Leonardo da Vinci and Youth have for years been the most important means of supporting and promoting co-operative action in education, training and youth within the EU and beyond, and, most importantly, of bringing a European experience to millions of individuals in these countries. Open also to the candidate countries, our programmes have played an important part in their preparations to join the European Union.

The current phase of these programmes runs out at the end of 2006. We want to know the views, wishes and ambitions of all our stakeholders – programme participants and potential participants – before the Commission puts forward its formal proposal for the new phase of programme action to start in 2007.

That is why I am today launching this public consultation exercise. This document sets out thirteen key questions about future programme action. I warmly invite all those with an interest to respond and so to help us develop a new generation of programmes which respond better to your needs and which reinforce the quality of education, training and youth activities in Europe. We need to be creative and flexible to design worthy successors to Socrates, Tempus, Leonardo da Vinci and Youth that will work well more than ten years from now. Please take advantage of this opportunity to contribute to our thinking!

Viviane REDING
Brussels, November 2002

Introduction: What this document is about

This document launches a wide public consultation with all those involved in and with an interest in the EU's education, training and youth programmes Socrates, Tempus, Leonardo da Vinci and Youth. It is the first step towards preparing the new generation of programmes, to start in 2007. The consultation will inform the Commission's detailed proposals for such programmes, which it will put forward in 2004.

Sections 2 to 4 set out the context for this consultation: what has been achieved so far in our programmes; what have been the main developments at European level in education, training and youth policy; and the scope of programme action in these fields. The information contained in these sections is necessarily brief. The annex contains a list of web addresses offering more information about each of the actions or policies mentioned in this document.

Consultees are invited to respond to a series of thirteen key questions, which are set out in detail in Section 5 of this document. They are divided into three sections:

1. *The type of action to be supported through European programmes in the period after 2006.*

2. *The geographical coverage of the programmes – which countries should be involved in which actions?*

3. *The design and structure of the new generation of programmes.*

Please turn to page 20 for the full list of questions.

Finally, Section 6 explains the different ways the consultees can send in their views.

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1. *The consultation process*

1.1 The European Commission is starting to prepare its proposals for the future of European co-operation in the fields of education, training and youth. These proposals will build on the achievements of the existing Socrates, Tempus, Leonardo da Vinci and Youth programmes, which expire at the end of 2006.

1.2 The Commission's proposals will also support the significant policy developments that have taken place in these fields following the 2000 Lisbon European Council meeting, which set a strategic goal for the European Union by 2010 *"to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustained economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion."* Education, training and youth policy have important roles to play in achieving this goal. The policy developments that have already taken place are outlined in Section 3 of this document.

1.3 The present document is designed to invite all those with a direct or indirect interest in action at European level in education, training and youth to give us their views on what the new programmes should contain, how they should be structured, and what individuals and institutions they should target. We invite responses from:

- regional and local authorities of EU Member States;
- national, regional and local authorities of other countries, including the EEA and candidate countries;
- educational/ training/ youth institutions and individuals for whom the existing programmes are designed (whether they have taken part in the programmes or not);
- European associations and foundations in the fields covered by our programmes;
- social partners (employers' and employees' organisations), teacher/trainer associations, relevant NGOs, cultural associations and other groups making up civil society;
- partners in the voluntary sector, particularly those promoting exchanges of young people or voluntary service for young people;
- all those with an interest in our activities, even – especially – if they have not so far taken part.

1.4 The Commission's proposals will take the form of one or more draft Decisions of the European Parliament and of the Council, which will provide the legal base for the programme actions.

1.5 The public consultation process will last until the end of February 2003. The Commission wants to gain a full picture of the needs, ambitions and wishes of everyone concerned – as well as a clear view of what needs to be improved in the current generation of programmes – as we develop our proposals.

1.6 This consultation is *not* an evaluation of the existing programmes. Detailed in-depth evaluations are already under way separately and others are being launched, designed to identify the main strengths and weaknesses of each programme and to propose improvements in the way they are run.

1.7 The current consultation looks to the future, focusing on strategic questions for the construction of the new programmes in education, training and youth after the year 2006, such as the type of action to be supported, geographical coverage, and programme design. The consultations and related activities which took place recently in response to the Youth White Paper and during the preparation of the Commission's Communication on lifelong learning will also be a source for appraisal of past experiences, further developments and proposals.

2. *What we have achieved so far: the Socrates, Tempus, Leonardo da Vinci and Youth programmes*

2.1 Our existing programmes in education, training and youth are based on Articles 149 and 150 of the Treaty establishing the European Community.[1] These articles define the Community's role: to support and to supplement action in the Member States by fostering co-operation between them. The Treaty reaffirms Member States' sole responsibility for the content and organisation of education and training systems. It defines a number of actions to be undertaken at European level, but requires that they stop short of harmonisation of Member State laws and regulations.

2.2 When we look at the past or the future of our programmes, we must remember that this legal framework emphasises the primary responsibility of the Member States when it comes to education, training and youth policy. EU programmes encourage national policy co-operation in Europe on a complementary not an alternative basis.

2.3 European Community action in education, training and youth started in the 1970s and expanded into several programmes – Erasmus, Comett, Youth for Europe, Lingua, Petra, Force, Eurotecnet – during the 1980s and early 1990s. In 1995, a major restructuring of this activity led to the creation of just three programmes – Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci and Youth for Europe – encompassing all the previous programmes and adding important new activities such as adult education. In 1996, the programme Youth for Europe was complemented by the European Voluntary Service initiative. The European Year of Lifelong Learning in 1996 played a key role in the establishment of lifelong learning as the essential overarching theme of education and training policy in the EU and in its Member States.

2.4 The first phase of the Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci and Youth for Europe programmes ran from 1995 to 1999. They were renewed, with some substantial changes - such as the integration of the different youth actions into one single Youth programme - for a further phase covering 2000 to 2006. The new phase of the programmes introduced 'joint actions' to implement initiatives that go beyond the scope of a single programme.

2.5 The question of how best to link the different programmes and adopt an integrated approach was a key issue in the discussions leading to the renewal of the three programmes. It remains one of the major questions for the current consultation, particularly given the important policy developments that have taken place recently such as the Council Resolution on lifelong learning as a guiding principle for education, training and youth policies.

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[1] With the exception of the Tempus programme, which is based on Article 308, a general provision, which permits Community action in areas not otherwise covered by the Treaty

2.6 Between 1998 and 2000, the coverage of the Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci and Youth programmes gradually expanded from the 15 EU Member States and 3 EEA countries to encompass a further 12 candidate countries[2], as a vital part of the preparation for their joining the EU as full Member States. Negotiations are currently under way to open the three programmes to Turkey's participation, which is expected from 2004.

2.7 The Tempus programme was launched in 1990 to support education reform in Central and Eastern Europe following the fall of the Berlin Wall. Since then, the programme has been renewed three times and extended to cover the countries of the western Balkans, and the former Soviet Union. In 2002, a further extension to the countries of the southern Mediterranean was launched.

Socrates

Development

2.8 The launch of Socrates in 1995 marked a major extension of European co-operation in education. It was adopted for five years with a budget of EUR 850 million.[3] With the creation of the Comenius chapter, the whole of compulsory school education was covered, not just language teaching and learning. In higher education, the absorption of the Erasmus programme into Socrates saw major restructuring, with the introduction of a university-based institutional approach, and new actions such as Europe-wide 'thematic networks' in specific subject areas or themes. A new small-scale adult education action was introduced, as well as support for innovation in open and distance learning (ODL), reflecting the inclusion of distance education in the Maastricht Treaty.

2.9 The second phase of Socrates, which started in 2000, consolidated and extended the first. It was adopted for a period of seven years with a budget of EUR 1.85 billion. The major innovation was the introduction of the Grundtvig action to foster the development of lifelong learning approaches. Grundtvig supports not only adult education but also other educational pathways outside the formal education sector, including opportunities for those who drop out of school or leave early. In addition, the new Minerva action increased the scope of open and distance learning activities, to reflect the rapidly growing importance of new technologies in education as an issue for European co-operation. Language teaching and learning became an objective of every action, language actions focusing on school education were integrated into Comenius, and a new Lingua action was created to complement this approach, including transversal activities such as awareness-raising campaigns and language learning tools. The European Year of Languages 2001 also gave extra momentum to language learning within the programme.

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2 Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia

3 Increased to EUR 933 million by 1999

Impact

2.10 A detailed report on the implementation of the first phase of Socrates was published in 2001, and can be consulted online.[4] There is a consistent pattern of remarkable progress on the one hand and persisting difficulties on the other, which sets the agenda for the future.

2.11 The impact of student, pupil and teacher mobility goes deep and extends beyond the topic of study or teaching. Studies have shown that Erasmus students, in general, returned with the view that the study period abroad was a culturally and linguistically valuable experience, led to substantial academic progress and offered them advantages in the job market. With the creation of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) in 1989 the EU developed a powerful tool for recognising students' achievements abroad. This system has steadily expanded across universities in Europe and beyond and has done much to make mobility more feasible and rewarding. It is now being extended to other areas, such as training and lifelong learning, and is being complemented by a Diploma Supplement to improve understanding of what students have actually studied, as well as the transferability of university diplomas between institutions.

2.12 Difficulties remain, however. The limited budget and increasing demand for Socrates means that Erasmus student grants have fallen steadily since the early 1990s (average EUR 190 per month in 1991; EUR 146 per month in 2001), and this increases the risk of inequality between students and exclusion of those from poorer socio-economic backgrounds.[5] There continue to be problems integrating study abroad into the student's programme of studies at the home university. There are imbalances between countries, with the candidate countries sending out far more students than they receive and the UK and Ireland receiving far more than they send. There are significant obstacles to teacher mobility at both school and university level, mainly concerning the coverage of absences and the recognition of the work done abroad, which keep these numbers low. The administrative processes are still too complicated. These difficulties must be tackled in the future programme.

2.13 Another important result of the Socrates programme has been to make a European dimension a reality not only in universities but increasingly in schools, in teacher training and among adult educators. This has been done by supporting transnational project work, where several institutions co-operate to develop a product such as a curriculum, language teaching tools or a joint course. Such work ranges from large high-level European networks and projects bringing together the key specialists in a particular subject area, to small groupings of schools or adult education institutions in different countries, often in remote or disadvantaged areas. This brings a direct experience of Europe and opens new horizons to a vast number of our citizens.

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[4] COM(2001)75 final

[5] See the Commission's survey into the socio-economic background of Erasmus students (COM(2000)4)

2.14 The indirect impact of the programme must also not be underestimated. Major developments such as the Bologna Process to create a European higher education area (see next section) would have been unthinkable without the experience gained under the Erasmus and Socrates programmes. The e-Learning process was initiated as a follow-up to the ODL and Minerva actions of Socrates.

Key data - Socrates

The most striking result of Socrates is the sheer volume of opportunities it has given to students, learners and teachers to live and work in another European country, and the impact this has had on their lives. Under the first phase of Socrates, some 460,000 students studied abroad, along with some 40,000 university teachers. By October 2002, over one million university students had taken part in an Erasmus study period abroad under the programme. By the same time, around 15,000 schools had participated in multilateral school partnerships, involving 150,000 teachers and over 2 million pupils in project activities. In the first phase of Socrates, around 150,000 school pupils went abroad in language class exchanges and 80,000 school education staff took part in mobility projects and in-service courses abroad. During the same period nearly 1,200 transnational co-operation projects were funded between institutions and organisations involved in teacher education, intercultural education and education of specific target groups. In the adult education field, some 400 European Co-operation projects involving well over 2,000 partners have been supported since 1995, to which must be added the 20 major networks and over 200 European Learning Partnerships with almost 1,000 partners launched since the start of Grundtvig in the year 2000.

Tempus

2.15 The first phase of the Tempus programme was adopted in 1990 in the wake of the massive political changes in Central and Eastern European countries in the late 1980s. The European Union launched two programmes (Phare and later Tacis) to assist these countries (the "partner countries") in their transition towards democracy and market economies and to underpin political stability in the region. Education was seen as crucial to the transition process. The reform and overhaul of partner countries' education structures and systems was necessary to prepare them for the challenges of a competitive market economy and for a multiparty democratic system with an ever greater role for civil society. The Tempus programme was therefore designed to help partner countries in the Phare region of Central and Eastern Europe meet the challenge of higher education reform. This programme was renewed in 1993, extended in 1996 (when the Tacis countries of the former USSR became eligible) and renewed again in 1999. In 2002 the programme was extended to the Meda (southern Mediterranean) partner countries. The architecture of the programme has remained to a very large extent unchanged.

Development

2.16 The programme is designed to promote multilateral co-operation between higher education institutions in the EU and in partner countries, thus

encouraging the transfer of the know-how that stimulates and improves academic development, including the development of new curricula in disciplines such as law, economics and politics, the involvement of institutions in international co-operation, the acquisition of management skills by academic and administrative staff, and the opening up of partners' education systems to civil society, thereby reinforcing it. This last aspect has gained importance throughout the years and has become a crucial component of the programme. For a large number of partner countries (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia), reform in education was part of their preparation for access to the European Union. These countries are now in the pre-accession process and no longer participate in Tempus. The extension of Tempus to the Meda countries has served to confirm not only the educational value of the programme but also its validity as an instrument to further intercultural dialogue.

Impact

2.17 Tempus has, as envisaged, had a positive impact on the higher education systems of partner countries. University curricula were reworked into modular structures and internationally compatible formats. Staff were retrained. Tempus grants helped partner institutions gain access to the Internet and other new information opportunities. Between 1990 and 1997, almost 100,000 international staff and student exchanges were carried out with Tempus funding. By helping to establish new personal and institutional relationships, Tempus supported the reconstruction work that took place in the partner countries in the latter part of the 1990s. The programme has been instrumental in training a generation of academics and administrators who are now beginning to gain political, social and economic responsibilities in the candidate countries. The programme has created new opportunities for institutions in the partner countries and in the EU to benefit from co-operation.

2.18 Challenges remain, however. Some have expressed concern that the programme may have encouraged brain drain in some partner countries. At administrative level, the contractual framework needs to be simplified and the administrative load on participants reduced.

Key data – Tempus

Since 1990, the Tempus programme has supported thousands of projects and provided opportunities for co-operation and exchanges in the field of higher education to thousands of institutions from the EU. Over 2,200 Joint European Projects (consortia involving as a minimum two EU higher education institutions and one institution from partner countries), almost 17,000 individual mobility grants, and over 750 other types of projects were funded between 1990 and 2000. The programme has supported almost 180,000 mobility flows over this period, of which 135,000 staff and 45,000 students.

Leonardo da Vinci

Development

2.19 The Leonardo da Vinci programme for the implementation of a Community vocational training policy was adopted for a period of five years (1995-1999), with a budget of EUR 620 million. The key objective of the programme was to support the development of policies and innovative actions in Member States. The programme rationalised and extended Community action in vocational training, which was previously divided among the programmes Comett, Petra, Force, Lingua and Eurotecnet.

2.20 The second phase of the programme was adopted for the period 2000-2006 with a budget allocation of EUR 1.15 billion. The aim of the second phase of the programme is to consolidate and extend the actions carried out previously and to reinforce the role of the programme to underpin vocational training policy at European level. Among its main innovations are the complete decentralisation of the mobility action, which is now fully managed by the National Agencies in each participating country, improved exploitation of Leonardo da Vinci project results and products, and the launch of joint actions linking with Socrates and Youth. From the beginning the programme supported projects which promoted vocationally-oriented language learning, and its second phase introduced a specific "Language Competence" measure.

Impact

2.21 A detailed Commission report on the implementation of the first phase of Leonardo da Vinci was published in December 2000[6]. This report notes that, in spite of its complexity and some difficulties with its management, the Leonardo da Vinci programme has been invaluable in the promotion of transnational initiatives and the internationalisation of best practice in the field of vocational training, in terms of quality and content of learning, innovation and the European dimension.

2.22 A first interim report on the implementation of the second phase, published in June 2002,[7] concludes that the implementation of the programme is broadly successful and has benefited from the simplification of objectives and procedures introduced in this phase. However, the programme remains very complex, which is sometimes an obstacle to the optimal participation of all target groups. An important element of the second phase of Leonardo da Vinci is the emphasis on the dissemination and use of project results, highlighting the programme's achievements, building on them, and transferring project results into mainstream vocational training systems and enterprise practices.

2.23 An overall strength of the programme has been its support for transnational mobility of young workers/trainees, as well as the mobility and employability of participants in the projects. This to the benefit not only of the participants from Member States and EEA countries, but also to participants from

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6 COM(2000)863 final
7 COM(2002)315 final

candidate countries where the Leonardo da Vinci projects contribute strongly to the evolution and adaptation of national training systems in preparation for the accession to the Union.

Key data – Leonardo da Vinci

In the first phase of the programme 127,000 young workers/trainees had a period of training in another country (an average of about 25,000 per year); more than 77,000 organisations successfully worked on projects financed by the programme; 2,500 pilot projects of different sorts were financed with an average Community financial contribution of EUR 120,000.

During the first two years of the second phase of the programme 75,500 young workers/trainees took part in mobility actions (an increase to about 37,500 per year, reflecting the priority now given to these actions); 496 pilot projects were financed with an average Community financial contribution of EUR 340,000; about 7,000 organisations have been involved in project work, 16 % of which were SMEs, reflecting the efforts made to improve their participation in the programme's activities.

Youth

Development

2.24 The Youth programme,[8] established for the period 2000-2006 with a budget of EUR 520 million, includes activities from previous programmes such as Youth for Europe (short-term group exchanges) and European Voluntary Service and new actions such as 'youth initiatives', joint actions (together with Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci), intercultural dialogue and specific support measures. The programme is based on non-formal education, the concept of lifelong learning and the development of skills and competencies which promote active citizenship, the spirit of initiative and the fight against racism and xenophobia.

2.25 New priorities are established yearly. Priority themes are mainstreamed throughout the programme's different actions and activities. Since 2001 a key priority has been to help young people with fewer opportunities gain access to the Youth programme.

2.26 Following the 2001 action plan for EU regions bordering candidate countries in the build-up to enlargement, additional funds have been allocated to the programme as of 2003. These funds for cross border co-operation will allow for financing exchange projects, voluntary service and support measures involving border regions. Participation in the programme is not restricted to Member States, EEA and candidate countries. Other countries in the Mediterranean region – which are already targeted by the specific sub-programme EuroMed Youth – in south-eastern Europe and in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) are also at the heart of the Youth

[8] Decision No 1031/2000/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 April 2000 establishing the "Youth" Community action programme

programme. As a second priority, countries in Latin America are also targeted by the programme.

Impact

2.27 Young people learn a lot from each other and their different cultures by having contact with other societies and ways of life, whether through youth exchanges, voluntary service activities or youth initiatives. Such experiences help combat prejudice and stereotypes and make the concept of 'Europe' a reality for its citizens. Providing a 'non-formal learning experience' means helping to encourage social integration and active participation, to stimulate initiative and creativity and to improve employability and solidarity. Supporting the development of local communities is also a key effect of the programme. Youth participation in third country[9] co-operation is an important element in creating an area of peace and stability between neighbouring countries. In these priority regions, special attention is provided to support measures strengthening local organisations and developing partnerships.

2.28 A detailed Commission evaluation report on the implementation of Youth for Europe and the European Voluntary Service was published in October 2001. It shows that the aim of enhancing mutual understanding and awareness of Europe's diversity was broadly achieved. Participants generally developed greater self-confidence and initiative and were able to play a more active role in the local community. The evaluation identified issues concerning the coherence, accessibility and administrative procedures of the programmes, which have been improved and rationalised in the current Youth programme.

Key data - Youth

In the period 1995 to 1999, more than 400,000 young people participated in Youth for Europe and the European Voluntary Service. Since 2000 more than 250,000 young people have benefited from funding from the Youth programme. It attracts more than 10,000 projects and nearly 130,000 young people every year. Interest is growing. The number of applications across all actions has increased by approximately 23% between 2000 and 2001.

[9] "Third countries" means all countries beyond the 31 EU, EEA and candidate countries

3. *Other European policy developments in education, training and youth*

Lisbon summit

3.1 The development of education, training and youth policy at European level is not achieved only through the programmes just described. Coordinated action in these areas has increasingly been recognised by Member State governments as important to social and economic development in Europe. This has led to some very significant actions within the structures of the EU and at intergovernmental level, which should be taken into account in designing the future programmes.

3.2 The most important single event was the 2000 Lisbon European Council, at which the Heads of State or Government set the new strategic goal for the decade to 2010 cited in section 1 above.[10] An integrated approach involving structural reforms, more and better jobs, social inclusion and environmental action has been launched. Education and training have a major role to play in creating the conditions necessary to achieve this goal. The strategy will be implemented using a range of policy tools from legislation and programmes to an "open method of co-ordination" between Member States, which was launched in Lisbon. This new instrument has the potential to pave the way for coherent policies in areas such as education where a formal common policy is not appropriate but where enhanced co-operation and mutual learning at European level can add real value.

3.3 Following the Lisbon summit, the Commission is also working to strengthen the links between education and research. A series of forthcoming Commission Communications will set out the strategy in more detail. An important issue for the design of the new programmes will be to achieve better articulation between them and the Community's Framework Programmes for research and technology development.

Future objectives of education and training systems

3.4 Responding to the challenge set at Lisbon requires major efforts to strengthen co-operation on education and training policy. At the request of the Stockholm European Council in 2001, a set of 13 future objectives of education and training systems was defined and a work programme agreed, the fulfilment of which will constitute a large step towards the Lisbon goal.[11] This detailed work programme will be implemented using the open method of co-ordination between Member States. The Barcelona European Council in March 2002 underlined these ambitions by pointing out that education was one of the bases of the European "social model" and that Europe's education

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[10] "To become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustained economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion." Lisbon Presidency Conclusions paragraph 5

[11] COM(2001)59 and COM(2001)501

systems should become a "world quality reference" by 2010. An important part of the objectives process is the definition of indicators and benchmarks by which to measure the progress of each country and of Europe as a whole towards the objectives set for 2010.

3.5 The momentum given to co-operation on education policy is also linked to the preparation for enlargement of the EU. The involvement of the candidate countries in the implementation of the detailed work programme on the future objectives of education and training systems was agreed at a ministerial meeting in Bratislava in June 2002.

Lifelong learning framework

3.6 The Feira European Council of June 2000 asked the Commission and the Member States to identify coherent strategies and practical measures with a view to fostering lifelong learning for all. Following a Europe-wide consultation involving the Member States, the EEA and candidate countries, the social partners and NGOs, the Commission in November 2001 issued a Communication *Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality* in which the criteria for developing and implementing comprehensive and coherent lifelong learning strategies, as well as a range of priorities for action at European, national, regional and local level are set out. The Education Council adopted a Resolution on education and lifelong learning in May 2002. Lifelong learning is thus established as a guiding principle for the development of education and training policies at European level.

Bologna process

3.7 European higher education ministers committed themselves at a meeting in Bologna in 1999 to the creation of a 'European area of higher education' by 2010. This would consist of: a system of easily readable and comparable degrees, based on an undergraduate cycle leading to a Bachelors degree of minimum three years and a graduate (Masters) cycle; credit transfer along the lines of ECTS; promotion of mobility; promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance; promotion of a European dimension in higher education studies; and making European higher education more attractive for students and scholars from around the world.

3.8 The process set up at Bologna is having a major impact on European higher education. Countries are in the process of adapting their degree structures to a common model. The Commission is supporting major pilots in credit transfer, European Masters courses and quality assurance. The next phase of our programmes must play its full part in sustaining the Bologna process.

Bruges process

3.9 The European Council in Barcelona of March 2002, reflecting an initiative of the EU Directors Generals of vocational training in Bruges, gave its support to the idea of increased co-operation in vocational education and training (the 'Bruges process'). This aims at developing instruments to enhance the

transparency of vocational qualifications and competences, and to increase co-operation in vocational education and training.

3.10 The issue was debated at a conference held in June 2002 in Brussels with the participation of Member States, EEA countries, candidate countries and social partners. A consensus emerged to increase voluntary co-operation, focusing primarily on the issues of transparency, recognition, quality and guidance. Among the tools to be developed are: a single instrument supporting transparency of qualifications and competences; a system for credit transfer for vocational education and training at all levels; and a set of common principles for the validation of non-formal learning.

A new framework for co-operation in the field of youth

3.11 The Youth White Paper resulted from the observation that existing co-operation on youth matters was not responsive to the challenges created by demographic, sociological, economic and cultural changes in our societies. The Commission therefore decided in 1999 to conduct wide-ranging consultations leading to a White Paper on youth policies. The consultation exercise was not only considerable in scale, but also led to great many proposals. From spring 2000 to March 2001, it involved young people themselves, organisations working for and with them, researchers, and national, political and administrative authorities.

3.12 The White Paper *A new impetus for European youth* was adopted in November 2001 and led, six months later, to a Council resolution on the framework of European co-operation in the youth field. This framework focuses on two complementary themes: the application of the open method of co-ordination to the thematic priorities of the youth field (participation, information, voluntary service and research); taking more account of the youth dimension in other policies (such as education and training, the fight against racism and xenophobia, and employment). This impetus given to youth policy is also relevant for the preparation of the enlargement of the EU.

eEurope and eLearning

3.13 The Internet, multimedia learning resources, applications, services and infrastructures for learning were the focus of the eEurope initiative launched in December 1999. Its aim is to help bring Europe online. The recently approved action plan *eEurope 2005: An information society for all* proposes a set of actions ranging from broadband connections in schools to re-skilling for the knowledge society, including a proposal for an eLearning programme.

3.14 The use of ICT in education and training (eLearning[12]) is leading to changes as part of the modernisation of Europe's education and training systems. In 2000 and 2001 the Commission adopted an initiative and an action plan called *eLearning: Designing tomorrow's education*.[13] This targets areas of work to be

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12 In the Action Plan, eLearning has been defined as "the use of new multimedia technologies and the Internet to improve the quality of learning by facilitating access to resources and services as well as remote exchanges and collaboration."

13 COM(2000) 318 final, 24.05.2000 and COM(2001)172 final, 28.03.2001

implemented in co-operation with the Member States such as: access to adequate and up-to-date infrastructure and equipment; teacher and trainer education; the development of online services and content. In addition, there is support for the mainstreaming of many projects and pilots funded through other programmes, including Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci. The Commission is developing a new programme to take forward the eLearning initiative.

Languages

3.15 In the light of the success of the European Year of Languages 2001 and with the aim of prolonging its impact, a Council Resolution of February 2002 invited Member States to take a number of measures to promote linguistic diversity and language learning and asked the Commission to bring forward proposals for action. It will publish an Action Plan in 2003 with proposals for actions using resources available in existing community programmes and activities. The Barcelona Council in March 2002 asserted the need to improve basic skills in the EU, in particular by teaching at least two foreign languages from a very early age.

Erasmus World

3.16 In July 2002 the Commission adopted a proposal for the establishment of a new programme aimed at improving higher education and promoting intercultural understanding through co-operation with third countries. Called Erasmus World, the programme will seek primarily to provide a response to the growing internationalisation of higher education and the need to ensure that our education systems are better able to educate citizens for the emerging global society, to ensure that Europe attracts a fair share of the growing number of internationally mobile students, and to promote a more balanced share of this mobility among Member States.

3.17 The contents of the Erasmus World proposal are: European Union Masters courses delivered by networks of universities; grants for third country students and scholars; partnerships between European Union Masters courses and universities in third countries; and measures to enhance the attractiveness of European education by improving its visibility and accessibility.

4. *The scope of European Union action in education, training and youth*

4.1 The Treaty establishing the European Community sets the framework for, and in large part defines, the scope and purpose of action that can be supported through our programmes.

4.2 The emphasis in the Treaty is on strengthening the quality of education, training and youth work in Europe, and on developing their European dimension. The types of action it envisages include: encouraging mobility and exchanges across national boundaries; strengthening recognition arrangements for attainments gained abroad; promoting co-operation between educational, training and youth establishments; using vocational training to facilitate adaptation to industrial changes; exchanging information and experience on common issues.

4.3 A number of core aims for our existing programmes follow naturally from the Treaty and these will continue to be central as we develop the new generation:

- To reinforce quality in education, training and youth work and to foster innovation.
- To develop the European dimension, notably by encouraging networking and co-operation between institutions and individuals.
- To offer better opportunities to learn, work or undertake voluntary service in another country, and to have this experience fully recognised throughout Europe.

To achieve these strategic aims, the programmes must be designed as effectively as possible to further equal opportunities, to promote intercultural dialogue and to foster personal fulfilment, social inclusion, active citizenship and employability.

4.4 Moreover, the recent policy developments outlined in the previous section, notably the 'objectives' process, the lifelong learning framework and the White Paper on youth, present a new context and new challenges for the next generation of programmes. These programmes will be important instruments for realising these policy goals, and need to be designed to do so. At the same time, they must build on the achievements of the past programmes, and address their weaknesses.

5. *Consultation topics*

This section contains a series of topics on which consultation responses are requested. At this stage no options are ruled in or out. We want to get as complete a picture as possible of the future needs and wishes of all those involved in or affected by our programmes, before decisions are taken about the proposed architecture, content and implementation of the programme(s).

The topics are set out in three groups: (A) the actions needed to put the aims set out in the previous section into practice; (B) geographical coverage; (C) programme design and operation.

A Type of action

Context

When they started, Community programmes in education, training and youth placed a strong emphasis on learning abroad – "mobility". They steadily expanded to cover other sorts of action, notably transnational co-operation and exchange projects (intercultural learning, curriculum development, training and training products, thematic networks, information strategies, etc.) and systems to improve the quality of formal, informal and non-formal learning, of mobility and recognition (ECTS, NARIC).

The spectrum of actions supported by the programmes now covers: grants to support the additional costs of mobility and to reinforce the institutional arrangements underpinning its quality (recognition, language preparation, training of trainers, training of youth workers, etc); support for transnational projects and education for improving language learning and teaching; support for projects and individuals for developing creativity and spirit of initiative, support for voluntary activities in local projects in another country; support for exchange of good practice and networking, support for the process of transnational co-operation on a project basis, leading to products such as new information, training or teaching material; support for innovative pilot/demonstration projects; dissemination arrangements for completed projects; support for the establishment and operation of European organisations in the fields covered by the programmes.

Topics for consultation

A.1 What general or specific needs in the fields of education, training and youth should be addressed by future European Union programme action?

A.2 Which of the types of action supported by our current programmes will still be appropriate for the period beyond 2006? Which – if any - new ones should be added? Which – if any – should be dropped? Why?

A.3 How can our programmes more effectively complement action at national, regional and local levels (e.g. mobility grants), as well as other EU programmes?

How can they harness best practice in different countries, to achieve an outcome greater than the sum of all the parts?

A.4 How can our programmes better encourage innovation and its transfer into mainstream activity?

B. Geographical coverage

Context

The Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci and Youth programmes have expanded to cover the candidate countries.[14] In recent years, the EU has strengthened its links with third countries in the education and youth fields in particular – e.g. successive extensions of Tempus,[15] Euromed Youth, the new proposal for Erasmus World – and the nature of these links has changed with co-operation activities gaining in importance alongside the provision of aid. The introduction of programmes with the United States, Canada and Latin American countries (Alfa), has extended the scope of education co-operation between the EU and third countries.

The Youth programme is even open to other regions, such as the CIS countries, south-eastern Europe and Latin America. In the research area, through the sixth Framework Programme, the EU's co-operation activity has been opened up worldwide. The European Council at Barcelona has placed a new emphasis on establishing European education and training systems as a reference for the rest of the world. The opening of the education, training and youth programmes also help reinforce intercultural dialogue. The new generation of programmes should promote a more profound cultural interchange and understanding between developed and developing countries.

Topics for consultation

B.1 What types of action in education, training and youth are most relevant for co-operation with "third countries" (i.e. those beyond the 31 EU, EEA and candidate countries)?

B.2 Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci essentially reflect the needs of Europe's own citizens; but Tempus (and other Community activities) use education to build relations between the EU and third countries, even as a tool for development aid. Do we currently have the balance right between these two types of action? Should the EU promote more links between its own education and training institutions and the rest of the world, or should it concentrate on intra-European links?

B.3 Should we retain separate programmes broadly targeting (1) EU, EEA and candidate countries, and (2) the rest of the world? Or should third countries be included in the main education, training and youth programmes? If so, how?

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[14] Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia. Negotiations are under way to extend the programmes to Turkey.

[15] To the former Soviet Union, to the western Balkans and most recently to the southern Mediterranean

C. Programme design and organisation

Context

Traditionally the education programmes of the EU have been based on the organisation of the formal education sector (actions targeted at schools, universities, adult education) and on transversal areas such as languages or ICT, whereas the training and youth programmes have been structured around types of activity. Over the lifetime of the programmes, there has been growing emphasis on a comprehensive approach in learning, including formal, informal and non-formal learning in the different sectors (e.g. in formal learning settings, in work environments, in civil society), in order to improve the take-up of lifelong learning opportunities.

Topics for consultation

C.1 Up to now we have had separate programmes for education, training and youth work. Is it better to keep these separate programmes, which can reflect the specificity of the areas they deal with; or would it be better to have fewer programme(s) covering the whole lifelong learning process, within which education, training and youth would each find its place?

C.2 What could be the most effective mode of organisation for future programmes? By type of organisation? By type of activity? By groups of potential beneficiaries?

C.3 Some of the existing programme actions, such as individual mobility grants, are managed de-centrally via National Agencies in the participating countries. Other actions, such as large multinational projects, are managed centrally by the European Commission with the help of its Technical Assistance Office. What are the advantages and disadvantages of these two approaches? Can they be improved?

C.4 Are any potential participants in the programme excluded because of the way it is designed or run? Are all the main stakeholders in education, training and youth suitably involved in the programmes (at European, national, regional and local levels)? What are the barriers that keep out those who currently do not take part or are under-represented, such as SMEs and the social partners, and how can they be lifted?

C.5 How to build sufficient flexibility into the programme design and the definition of its component actions to permit it to respond to the common policy challenges facing European countries in the coming years?

... and finally

What have been the best and the worst features of the existing programmes? What elements would you like to see reinforced, what introduced, and what dropped? How can the programmes be made more user-friendly? If you have not taken part in our programmes so far, why not?

6. *How to respond to the consultation*

6.1 The consultation period runs from 4 November 2002 to 28 February 2003.

6.2 You are invited to send your replies to us via an online response form, which will be on the DG EAC web-site from the end of November 2002 at:
http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/newprogconsult
All data relating to individuals is anonymous. Respondent organisations are asked to identify themselves. Acknowledgements will be sent by email if a valid email address is supplied.

6.3 Responses may also be sent to us in writing. They should be addressed to:

"New programmes consultation"
European Commission – DG EAC
rue de la Loi 200 (B-7 7/64)
B-1049 Brussels
Belgium

6.4 We strongly encourage respondents to use the online response form. It will help us make a more detailed and useful analysis of your replies.

Sources of further information

Socrates Programme
http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/socrates.html

Evaluation of Socrates I
http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/keydoc/com2001/com2001-075en.pdf

Survey into socio-economic background of Erasmus students
http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/keydoc/com2000/com2000-4en.pdf

Leonardo da Vinci Programme
http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/leonardo_en.html

Evaluation of Leonardo da Vinci I
http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/leonardo/report_en.html

Tempus Programme
http://europatest/comm/education/tempus/index.html

Youth Programme
http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/youth/youthprogram.html

Evaluation of Youth for Europe / European Voluntary Service
http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/youth/program/eval/sec_2001_1621_en.pdf

Lisbon, Barcelona and other Presidency conclusions
http://ue.eu.int/presid/conclusions.htm

Objectives process / Open Method of Co-ordination
http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policy_en.html

Lifelong Learning
http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/lll_en.html

Bologna process
http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/bologna_en.html

Bruges process
http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/bruges/index_en.html

Youth White Paper
http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/youth/ywp/index.html

eLearning
http://europa.eu.int/comm/elearning

Languages
http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/languages_en.html

Erasmus World proposal
http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/world/index_en.html

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